

1989

Poems

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Recommended Citation

Salom, Philip, Poems, *Kunapipi*, 11(3), 1989.

Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/kunapipi/vol11/iss3/5>

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Abstract

WINDOW MANNEQUIN, SCOTS CASTLE

Philip Salom

WINDOW MANNEQUIN

For a start, they're meant to be like us
but they're all one race, white in fact,
or beige, to be exact. And they're all one sex
if you can call it that: mannequin, mannequin,
there simply aren't womannequins,
they're Stannaquins not Annaquins.
Though some are neat between the legs
and nowadays have breasts with knobbly nipplesin.
If this is beauty they're not saying anythin,
anachronistic eyelashing, and porcelain skin.
There are men, no tits on them, nothing's
on them, each crotch a lump like a manly chin.
(Which reminds me of good old Michael Finnegan,
at least he grew whiskers on his chinnegan,
there's nothing pubic here, the wind blew it innegan.)
But then, they're brittle, these mannequin:
maybe the rest fell off from too much wannequin.
So there'll never be those babykins,
no mamas murmuring of their little mannekins.

Oh mannequin, mannequin, you stare out forever
seeing nothing, the blank world of the future,
as we flood past, or stop, and staring in
see you exact of face and limb, no life within,
wakeful as insomniacs, or dopey as a dream,
it's all the same, blanking out, or blanking in again.
Life is painless when beauty gushes you like endorphin.
Which is just as well, considering you're always plastered.

Mannequin Oh mannequin, your plural, surely, is mannequine.
Go back to your robotic, narcissistic scene. Better still
go back to the place of casts, to the castle,
to the two pervotic men who made you: Doctors Frank and Stein.

SCOTS CASTLE

Past these walls, the air emulsifies
with ocean and double-weights the walls
to be one slip away from cliff-edge:
the masons must have clung like Prometheus
the fire in their fingertips,
their walls rising solidly and dark above
the white abyss of air-inviting
plunge. Air so silverish and dense
it seems to say: 'Come. Be one with me.
Feel my spirit. It is the breath beaten
from the airy and luminous dead.
I am the body made transparent
by history. I am courage made transparent
by death. Come, be one with me.'
Or it shouts, white and foul-mouthed:
'Come out here, fuck you, and fight!'

As if air is truer place. Air the power
the dead under the earth have given up,
that walls of solid stone can't merit.
The stone is heavier for this. Resisting
just as the owner centuries ago, given
a daemon of far less airy beatings
by the land-sharks of his days,
then trussed above his own fire like a pig
held back, resisted, as the flames
turned him into crackling. His will,
steeper than 1st degree, he lived.
Had lived that long above the fall.
When death came for him in old age
like a wave of light, only then, he went.
His stone is the truer place.
Great and dark, against the ghosting air
the molten hearth of ocean.